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TWELFTH STREET

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THE CITY PLAN COMMISSION
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HARLAND BARTHOLOMEW
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OFFICE OF

THE CITY PLAN COMMISSION

OF ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI.

May First, Nineteen Nineteen.

To the Honorable Board of Public Service,
St. Louis, Mo.

Gentlemen—The City Plan Commission has the honor to transmit herewith for your consideration a report on the development of Twelfth Street.

Respectfully submitted,

ERNEST J. RUSSELL,
Chairman,

ALEXANDER S. LANGSDORF,
Vice-Chairman.

W. F. CARTER,

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Members of the City Plan Commission,

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President Board of Aldermen,

E. R. KINSEY,
President Board of Public Service,

CHAS. M. TALBERT,
Director Streets and Sewers,

NELSON CUNLIFF,
Commissioner of Parks and Recreation,

JAMES N. McKELVEY,
Building Commissioner,
Members Ex-Officio,

HARLAND BARTHOLOMEW,
Engineer.

Twelfth street, "Court of Honor," looking south from Washington avenue. The original width of 150 feet for this portion of Twelfth street has given St. Louis a public plaza of unquestioned benefit, in fact our principal public gathering place.

TWELFTH STREET

More than 250,000 people living south of the Mill Creek Valley and more than 200,000 people living north of Cass and Easton Avenues are deprived of direct access to the central business district, because of a lack of direct street connections to the north and to the south. This connection is well shown by traffic counts, which indicate that a large percentage of the traffic entering and leaving the business district travels in a westwardly direction. It is a commonly known fact that much traffic from the north and south uses Grand or Jefferson Avenues and turns east from there to the central business district.

Not only are street connections to the north and south from the business district so poor that vehicular traffic avoids them, but their irregularity necessitates their

View of Twelfth street looking south from Washington avenue, taken several years ago. Compare this with present use of the street by all forms of traffic.

avoidance by many of the street car lines. Such car lines as use them are subjected to considerable loss of time.

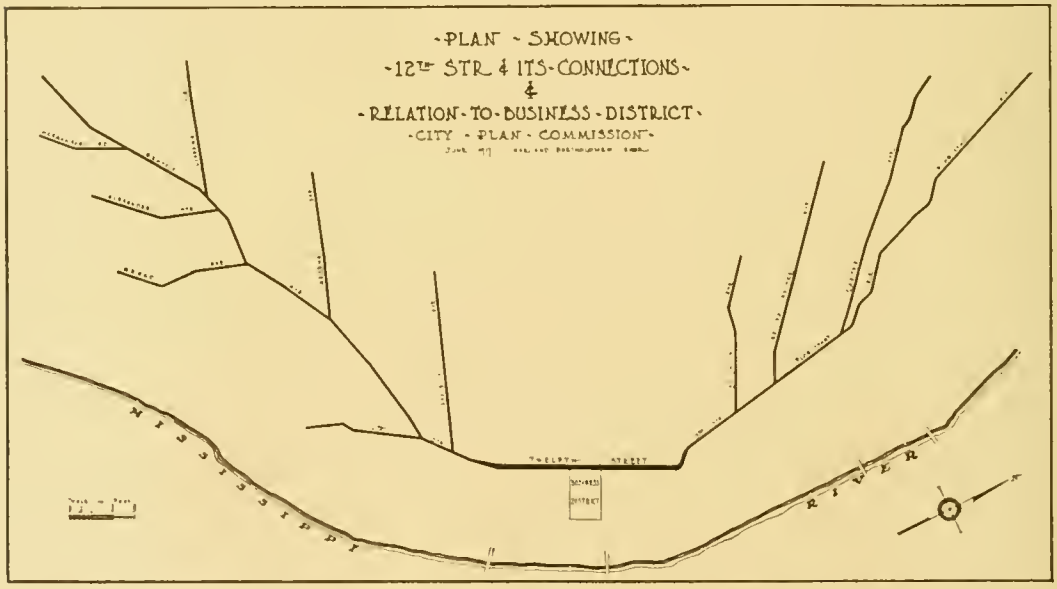
For the past ten or fifteen years the active growth of St. Louis has been to the west. There are several direct street connections to the west, though not of sufficient width. Recent ordinances have been passed, however, to facilitate the movement of traffic westward, such as the widening of Washington Avenue, the widening of the roadway on Locust Street, the Pine-Lawton cut-off, the Morgan-Delmar cut-off at Grand Avenue, the widening of Morgan Street from 12th to 14th, and its proposed repavement throughout. There is still room for substantial growth in both the northern and southern sections of the city, particularly to the northwest and southwest, where much unimproved land now exists. These two sections of the city ought to be brought into more effective use inasmuch as their upbuilding will mean additional improvement within the city limts. Additional growth to the west means that St. Louis will not benefit directly until the city limits can be extended. Additional growth to the north and south is possible only through better street connections

on which can come the needed extensions of the transit lines to accommodate the increased population there.

Twelfth Street, extended to meet Gravois Avenue on the south and Natural Bridge Avenue and Florissant Avenue on the north would be the backbone of all vehicular and transit connection to the central business district from the south and from the north. Indeed this route should become the most used thoroughfare in St. Louis when properly extended and widened.

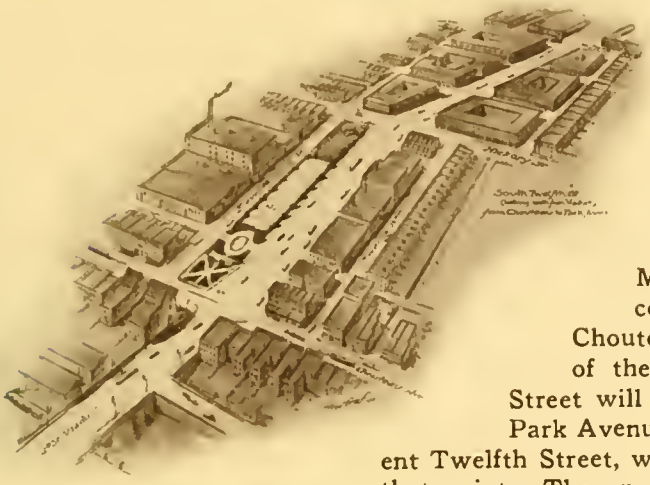
RELATION OF TWELFTH STREET TO THE BUSINESS DISTRICT

Twelfth Street is the present western boundary of the central business district. Its present width of 150 feet between Market Street and Washington Avenue has acted as a natural barrier to further westward expansion of the retail business district. This has been a desirable boundary since it helped to stimulate a more inten-



Twelfth street is the center of the system of arterial streets, and as such will greatly influence the further development of rapid transit as well as vehicular traffic movement.

sive development of the business district than perhaps might otherwise have occurred. The business district is growing, however. For various well-known reasons it can expand only northward or westward. Because of the preponderance of the traffic movement westward, the business district will naturally expand in that direction and Twelfth Street will not long be the western boundary of the business district. Today, in fact, a substantial amount of wholesale business has already spread out Washington Avenue as far as 18th. Within a few years the business district can be expected to expand at least as far west as 18th Street. Twelfth Street will then be an even more important factor in the business district's future than it is at present. Its great width permits it to act now as a distributing point for much of the vehicular traffic passing to and from the business district. Likewise it will render an exceedingly similar valuable service for rapid transit subway purposes when rapid transit is first established.



CONNECTIONS SOUTH

An ordinance has recently been passed providing for a continuation of the present width of 150 feet on Twelfth Street southwardly from Market to Spruce Streets, which is at the entrance of the new $500,000 viaduct over the Mill Creek Valley. The estimated cost of this widening is $271,000. At Chouteau Avenue, the southern terminus of the Twelfth Street viaduct, Twelfth Street will soon be opened directly south to Park Avenue, where it connects with the present Twelfth Street, which has a width of 80 feet beyond that point. The opening between Chouteau and Park Avenues is provided for by an ordinance passed in 1918. At Geyer Avenue, it is proposed to effect a direct connection between Twelfth Street and Gravois Avenue, which latter street terminates now at Russell Avenue.

View from Viaduct looking south towards Chouteau avenue. An ordinance for the opening of Twelfth street south from the Viaduct passed in 1918, and the commission appointed to fix benefits and damages has recently filed its report. This opening will remove the buildings seen in the center background.

View showing relation of Twelfth street to the development of St. L

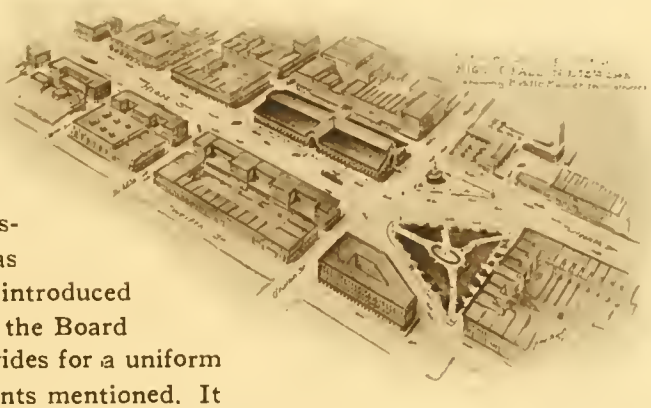
s. Connections north and south reach to very nearly all parts of the city.

Gravois avenue west of Grand is now 80 feet wide, having been widened several years ago.

Gravois Avenue is a radial thoroughfare running diagonally through the entire southern section of the city. It virtually bisects the great population there. Some years ago it was widened from 60 to 80 feet west of Grand Avenue. East of Grand Avenue it now has a width of but 60 feet, accommodates throughout much of its length a double track trolley line and has a poor pavement, which set of circumstances combine to render it practically useless as a traffic artery east of Grand Avenue. The entire southern Twelfth Street route from Chouteau Avenue to the city limits at Gravois Avenue, a distance of something over six miles, should be given a uniform width of 80 or 100 feet. Ordinances are now being prepared and will soon be introduced for the very necessary extension of Gravois Avenue from Russell to meet Twelfth Street at Geyer Avenue, for the widening of Gravois Avenue from 60 to 100 feet between Russell Avenue and Grand Avenue, and for an increase in the width of Twelfth Street from 80 to 100 feet between Geyer and Park. The total assessed value of property to be taken for these three improvements is $623,000, which would make their total estimated cost from $1,500,000 to $2,000,000.

Gravois avenue east of Grand avenue is 60 feet wide. A width of 100 feet will be none too wide to carry the future traffic of this street.

CONNECTIONS NORTH



An ordinance for the extension of Twelfth Street north from Washington Avenue via High, 13th, Mullanphy and 15th Streets, to meet Florissant Avenue at Palm Street has been prepared and will soon be introduced for passage at the new session of the Board of Aldermen. This ordinance provides for a uniform width of 100 feet between the points mentioned. It will connect directly with such important streets as St. Louis Avenue, North Market Street, Florissant Avenue, Carter Avenue and Natural Bridge Avenue, if the latter were extended a short half block to Palm Street. The total assessed value of property to be taken for this widening, which is known as the North Twelfth Street opening, is $587,840, which makes its total estimated cost not more than $1,500,000. An ordinance will soon be prepared and introduced for the widening of Natural Bridge Avenue and its extension to Palm Street, also widened, the entire route to have a width of 100 feet. Natural Bridge Avenue is a main street in the northern section of the city and most nearly divides that section in two, making it the natural center of traffic movement to and from the central business district. Natural Bridge Avenue on the north as well as Gravois Avenue on the south are two of the principal thoroughfares leading into St. Louis County and which connect directly with various routes to different parts of the state. West of Kingshighway and north of Natural Bridge Avenue there is developing a substantial industrial area adjacent to the Terminal Railroad belt line. Natural Bridge Avenue is now occupied by a double track trolley line, making its present width of 60 feet entirely ineffectual for good traffic movement. A width of 80 to 100 feet is needed to accommodate the great volume of traffic that will develop as a result of the industrial district. There is now no street that connects

View looking north at High and Biddle streets, showing present Biddle Market on the left. At this point High street would be widened 50 feet on the east (right-hand side of picture), under the plan here suggested.

Twelfth street looking north towards Washington avenue. Buildings shown will be areaded on first floor to admit sidewalk. There is an 80-foot clearance between buildings.

this great industrial area or this entire section of the city directly with the business district. The widening of Natural Bridge Avenue and the extension of north Twelfth Street will open up a route which will be of incalculable advantage to this whole section of the city.

Florissant Avenue is also an important artery at the extreme northern part of the city. West of Warne Avenue it has a width of 100 feet; between Warne and Grand it has a width of 60 feet. Between Grand and Grove Street, Florissant Avenue has been officially dedicated but never physically opened, while from Grove Street to Palm it has a width of 60 feet. There should be a uniform width of at least 80 feet or 100 feet on Florissant Avenue from Palm Street, the terminus of the north Twelfth Street route, to Warne Avenue, west of which point, as previously stated, Florissant Avenue has a width of 100 feet.

CONCLUSION

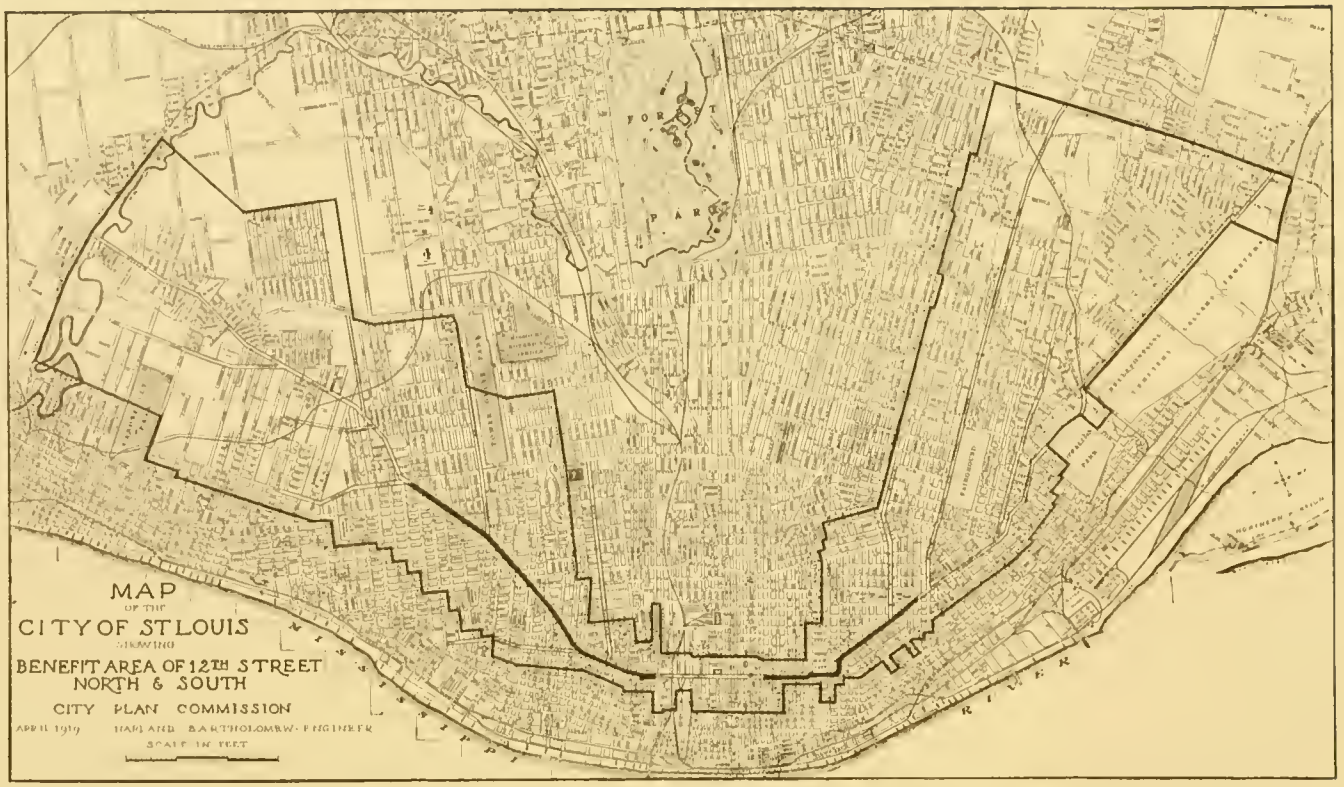
There is shown herewith a map illustrating the connections of Twelfth Street north and south. From this it will be seen that the Twelfth Street route once developed can literally be called the backbone of St. Louis, for its connections spread to a great percentage of

Natural Bridge avenue. Under the present plan the street would be widened from 60 feet, as at present, to 100 feet throughout.

the city's area, while it will afford direct vehicular, as well as transit line accommodations to the business district for a considerable majority of the city's population. Not only is it absurd to think of so large a population being deprived of direct connections with the central business district, but it may be stated with confidence that the city can no longer grow to the north or south without the very necessary connections which the Twelfth Street route will provide.

The City Plan Commission proposes that the various ordinances to complete the entire route be introduced at this time so that the actual physical improvements may be made within the next two or three years. This is extremely desirable since to postpone them will not only increase their cost, but may even make their full realization impossible. A further reason for undertaking all of the ordinances at one time is that the great area benefited by the entire route can be assessed for its proportion of the benefit practically at one time instead of having to bear several special assessments if the route were to be developed piecemeal. Assuredly much of the property will be benefited by the opening of the entire route. If opened all at one time the benefit assessments will be no hardship upon any particular property. The total cost of the entire plan is not great. The city at large should bear at least 30 per cent of this cost as its share of the benefit to be derived. The remaining 70 per cent to be paid by property which is benefited by the opening will be but a small percentage of the actual benefit derived from the opening, while the great area over which benefit assessments can be spread should make the total cost to individual property owners exceedingly small. Property fronting on the new route should, of course, be benefited

Natural Bridge avenue west of Union avenue could now be widened without difficulty and at small cost. Here will soon be an extensive industrial district requiring a 100-foot street.



Because of the greater accessibility of the business district from large sections of the city, north and south, it is suggested that the areas of benefit for the Twelfth street openings be made large—as shown on the map. This will reduce the cost to individual property holders and make the cost payments less burdensome.

more than that which is some distance away and should naturally pay a higher percentage of the cost.

The comparative unanimity of demand for this improvement, not only by the local improvement associations in various parts of the city affected by it, but upon the part of all those interested in the development of the entire city warrants the earliest action possible, so that the great benefits to be derived may be realized at the earliest possible date. It is estimated that if all the ordinances were to be acted upon by July of this year, it would take at least two years for the special commissions appointed to fix benefit and damage assessments to report their findings. It would then take at least another year to acquire title to the property. Under the most favorable circumstances, therefore, it would be 1922 or 1923 before the actual physical widening could take place and the improvement of the route completed.

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